

CUSTOMER NO. 23932

PATENT APPLICATION
Docket No. 58886-18USPTLISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-15. (Canceled).

16. (New) A method for renting a rental vehicle, comprising:

transmitting rental transaction details to a selected rental vehicle, the rental transaction details including driver identification linked to an identification of the selected rental vehicle;

5 storing the transmitted rental transaction details in a memory located within the selected rental vehicle;

transmitting the stored rental transaction details from the selected rental vehicle to an exit security point of a rental vehicle lot as the selected rental vehicle approaches the exit security point; and

10 making the transmitted rental transaction details available to security personnel at the exit security point.

17. (New) The method of claim 16 further including printing a copy of a rental agreement for the selected rental vehicle at the exit security point.

18. (New) The method of claim 16 further including resetting a fuel and distance measurement device located within the selected rental vehicle.

19. (New) The method of claim 18 further including monitoring fuel state and distance traveled using the fuel and distance measurement device.

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20. (New) The method of claim 19 further including transmitting the monitored fuel state and distance traveled information from the selected rental vehicle to a central rental node when the selected rental vehicle returns to either the same or a different rental vehicle lot.

21. (New) The method of claim 20 further including calculating charges for use of the selected rental vehicle based on the transmitted monitored fuel state and distance traveled information.

22. (New) The method of claim 16 further including additionally transmitting the rental transaction details to the exit security point of the rental vehicle lot in a manner that does not pass through the selected rental vehicle and its memory.

23. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein the rental transaction details include credit card data for a renter of the vehicle.

24. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein the rental transaction details include an identification of a type of rental agreement for the selected rental vehicle.

25. (New) The method of claim 24 further including printing a copy of the rental agreement for the selected rental vehicle at the exit security point.

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26. (New) The method of claim 16 further including confirming responsive to selected rental vehicle approach to the exit security point that a rental record exists with respect to the selected rental vehicle.

27. (New) The method of claim 16 further including transmitting the stored rental transaction details from the selected rental vehicle to a database when the selected rental vehicle returns to either the same or a different rental vehicle lot.

28. (New) The method of claim 27 further including calculating charges for use of the selected rental vehicle based on the transmitted rental transaction details.

29. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein transmitting includes:
detecting by the rental vehicle itself of a return to a rental vehicle lot; and
responsive to such a detection, initiating a remote communication transmission of the stored rental information from the rented vehicle to a central rental node.

30. (New) The method of claim 28 further including:
acknowledging by the central rental node to the rented vehicle of receipt of the remote communication transmitted rental vehicle information; and
inhibiting by the rental vehicle of further transmission of the stored rental
5 information following central rental node acknowledgment.

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31. (New) The method of claim 30 further including calculating charges for use of the selected rental vehicle based on the transmitted rental transaction details.

32. (New) A method for renting a rental vehicle, comprising:
storing rental information in a rented vehicle, the rental information including current vehicle fuel level and vehicle distance traveled while rented;
detecting by the rental vehicle itself of a return to a rental vehicle lot;
responsive to such a detection, initiating a remote communication transmission of the stored rental information from the rented vehicle to a central rental node;
acknowledging by the central rental node to the rented vehicle of receipt of the remote communication transmitted rental vehicle information;
inhibiting by the rental vehicle of further transmission of the stored rental information following central rental node acknowledgment; and
calculating by the central rental node based on the transmitted rental vehicle information of a charge incurred for use of the rental vehicle.

10 33. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein the stored rental information further includes rental transaction details including driver identification linked to the rented vehicle

34. (New) The method of claim 33 further including deleting the link between driver identification and rented vehicle in response to rented vehicle return to the rental vehicle lot.

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35. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein calculating includes not charging for fuel fill up if the current fuel level is inadequate but the vehicle distance traveled since a last fill up is less than a threshold.

36. (New) A method for renting a rental vehicle, comprising:
entering through an in-vehicle user interface renter information to create rental transaction details including a driver identification linked to a selected rental vehicle;
storing the rental transaction details in a memory located within the selected rental vehicle;
transmitting the stored rental transaction details from the selected rental vehicle to a central rental node; and
making the transmitted rental transaction details available to security personnel at an exit security point of a rental vehicle lot when the selected rental vehicle approaches the exit security point.

37. (New) The method of claim 36 further including printing a copy of a rental agreement for the selected rental vehicle at the exit security point.

38. (New) The method of claim 36 further including resetting a fuel and distance measurement device within the selected rental vehicle.

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39. (New) The method of claim 38 further including monitoring fuel state and distance traveled using the fuel and distance measurement device.

40. (New) The method of claim 39 further including transmitting the monitored fuel state and distance traveled information from the selected rental vehicle to the central rental node when the selected rental vehicle returns to either the same or a different rental vehicle lot.

41. (New) The method of claim 40 further including calculating charges for use of the selected rental vehicle based on the transmitted monitored fuel state and distance traveled information.

42. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein the renter information include credit card data for a renter of the vehicle.

43. (New) The method of claim 42 wherein the renter of the vehicle is the driver.

44. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein the renter information include an identification of a type of rental agreement for the selected rental vehicle.

45. (New) The method of claim 44 further including printing a copy of the rental agreement for the selected rental vehicle at the exit security point.

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46. (New) The method of claim 36 further including confirming responsive to selected rental vehicle approach to the exit security point that a rental record exists with respect to the selected rental vehicle.

47. (New) The method of claim 36 further including transmitting the stored rental transaction details from the selected rental vehicle to a database when the selected rental vehicle returns to either the same or a different rental vehicle lot.

48. (New) The method of claim 47 further including calculating charges for use of the selected rental vehicle based on the transmitted rental transaction details.

49. (New) The method of claim 47 wherein transmitting includes:
detecting by the rental vehicle itself of a return to a rental vehicle lot; and
responsive to such a detection, initiating a remote communication transmission of the stored rental information from the rented vehicle to a central rental node.

50. (New) The method of claim 48 further including:
acknowledging by the central rental node to the rented vehicle of receipt of the remote communication transmitted rental vehicle information; and
inhibiting by the rental vehicle of further transmission of the stored rental
5 information following central rental node acknowledgment.

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51. (New) The method of claim 50 further including calculating charges for use of the selected rental vehicle based on the transmitted rental transaction details.

52. (New) A method for managing a plurality of rental vehicles located within a rental vehicle lot having a plurality of stations including a parking station and a return station, comprising:

monitoring by each rental vehicle of vehicle movement into one of the plurality of stations;

remotely communicating vehicle information to a processing unit in response to initial entry into the station;

recording by the processing unit of vehicle presence in the station in response to the remote communication from the vehicle.

53. (New) The method of claim 52 further including:

acknowledging by the processing unit to the rented vehicle of receipt of the remote communication transmitted vehicle information; and

inhibiting by the rental vehicle of further transmission of the vehicle information following central rental node acknowledgment until such time as the vehicle moves into a different station.

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54. (New) The method of claim 52 wherein the plurality of zones includes an exit security station, and wherein remotely communicating includes transmitting rental transaction details including driver identification linked to an identification of a selected rental vehicle from the selected rental vehicle to the processing unit as the selected rental vehicle enters the exit security station, the method further including:

making the transmitted rental transaction details available to security personnel at the exit security station.

55. (New) The method of claim 52 wherein the vehicle information includes monitored fuel state and distance traveled information for the rental vehicle, the method further comprising:

calculating charges for use of the rental vehicle based on the transmitted monitored fuel state and distance traveled information.

56. (New) The method of claim 52 further including graphically presenting information concerning vehicle location within the rental vehicle lot based at least in part on the recorded vehicle presence within one of the plurality of stations.

57. (New) The method of claim 56 further including graphically presenting, along with vehicle location, vehicle status information based at least in part on the remotely communicated vehicle information.